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PRELIMINARY SCIENTIFIC MEDICAL
EDUCATION IN SWITZERLAND.

BY PROF. R. RAMSAY WRIGHT.

During the summer I had my attention called to a paper by Prof. Herzen, the distinguished physiologist of Lausanne, on the above subject, which affords an excellent picture of the present regulations in Switzerland in regard thereto, and permits what must be always instructive for us—a comparison of these with our own.

Before 1886 the State examination in medicine was divided into a primary and final, very much after the fashion of the Council examinations here. The primary included physics, chemistry, botany, zoology (with comparative anatomy), anatomy (with histology), and physiology, together with practical examinations in chemistry, anatomy, and histology. No regulations existed as to the period of the students' course at which this examination should be passed; the student might present himself as soon as he had all the necessary tickets. Many, therefore, tried at the end of their third semester (*i.e.*, after two winter sessions and one summer session), but most did so at the end of the fourth semester (*i.e.*, after the second summer session). In both cases, however, there was the temptation to the raw student to plunge into the more advanced work of the primary at once, before he was ripe for it, because he had to present two winter

semester tickets in practical anatomy. These involved some twenty-four hours work per week during the winter, so that the student might be well prepared in that subject, but obviously had no time for anything else.

The neglect of the fundamental studies on which anatomy and physiology rest, had such a prejudicial effect on the education of the students that the various Swiss medical faculties were requested by the State to suggest a remedy. The remedy proposed was the subdivision of the primary into a physico-natural and an anatomico-physiological part, with the proviso that the first should be passed before the second.

This had the effect that the energies of the student, during the first two semesters, could be concentrated entirely upon physiology, chemistry, botany, zoology, and the associated practical courses which, in accordance with the spirit of the times, have to supplement the didactic teaching, while the next three semesters could be devoted entirely to anatomy, physiology, and histology. The temptation to plunge into practical anatomy in the first year was in this way removed, for the student who did so endangered his chance of passing the first division of the primary at the end of his second semester. Thus, in a medical course of five years (ten semesters), half of the time would be devoted to the primary, and half to the final, subjects (pathology and therapeutics, and the various professional branches).

This subdivision of the medical course met with various objections some who agreed that